

Summer & Fall Activity Guide

Regardless of where you live, nature is a playground loaded with fun and engrossing opportunities. Check out these great nature activities courtesy of **Carmen Field**, Education Associate/Naturalist at the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve, in Homer

In a forested area:

ACTIVITY

1 Ant Hike

Hikers inch along on their bellies, viewing natural wonders as if they were an ant.

Materials: 6-foot piece of string

Lay string down in straight line on forest floor. Give your child a magnifying glass, if available. Tell your ant hiker to keep his/her eyes no higher than 1 foot above the ground. Watch children find things they and you never knew were there!

ACTIVITY

2 Nature's Gallery

Children create a gallery of nature's art.

Materials: cut-out paper frame

Give your child one or more cut-out paper frames (8.5 x 11" paper with center cut out). Ask him/her to find an object, a scene, anything that might seem beautiful and would be worthy of framing in the area. Your artist should then place the frame over his/her natural art, come back to you, and then guide you back to Nature's Gallery. If your artist is not too shy, ask for an explanation of why that piece was chosen or what he/she found beautiful about it. If done with a group of kids, when all have framed their natural art, the group can go on a "tour" of their artwork.

ACTIVITY

3 Umbrella Bug Collecting

Children collect and observe bugs hidden in the leaves and branches of shrubs and trees.

Materials: umbrella and magnifying bug box or lens

Demonstrate how to shake branches of shrubs/trees into the inside of an open umbrella and then find bugs that have been collected. Bugs can be placed in magnifying bug boxes or under magnifying lenses for observation.

In a woodland with open understory or semi-open area:

ACTIVITY

4 Color Hike

Children match the color of unnatural objects to things they find in nature.

Materials: egg carton full of colored, manmade objects

Give your child an egg carton (or ½ a carton) filled with unnatural colored objects. Provide boundaries of where this activity will take place, and instruct your child to find objects in nature that match the colors of the things in their egg carton and place each matching thing in the cup with its counterpart. Another version of this activity would be to use color paint swatches from a hardware store - give your child one of these (or ask him/her to pick one out next time you're at the store) and then go outside to look for natural objects that match your child's paint swatch colors.

ACTIVITY

5 Hug a Tree

Children get to know one special tree without the sense of sight.

Materials: blindfold

Tie a blindfold around your child's head. Spin him/her around and lead to a nearby tree. Ask your child to feel, smell, and listen to "his/her" tree before being spun around again and led back to the starting point. Then remove the blindfold and challenge your child to find the same tree in the forest again using all senses.

ACTIVITY

6 Nature Safari

Families/children go on a scavenger hunt to discover natural treasures.

Materials: Nature Safari scavenger hunt list, paper/plastic bag

Distribute a Nature Safari scavenger hunt list (attached) and bag to each child in your family. Let kids know the safari boundaries and how long they'll have to find the items on their list before sending them off. Have your little hunter(s) show-&-tell what they've found when the time is up, so everyone can see what was found (or not found).

Nature Safari!!!

1. **SOMETHING FEELING SOFT**
2. **A NONNATURAL / MANUFACTURED OBJECT**
3. **SOMETHING BLACK**
4. **FEATHER**
5. **SOMETHING THAT FLOATS**
6. **AN ANIMAL'S HOME**
7. **A NATURAL CONTAINER**
8. **WOOD**
9. **NAME OF BIRD SEEN TODAY**
10. **TWO (2) OBJECTS OF DIFFERENT SHADES OF BROWN**
11. **SOMETHING BROKEN**
12. **SOMETHING FEELING ROUGH**
13. **SOMETHING SMELLY (GOOD OR BAD)**